

5-2-1990

Images in felt

Lisa Popovics

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.rit.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Popovics, Lisa, "Images in felt" (1990). Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed from

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Thesis/Dissertation Collections at RIT Scholar Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of RIT Scholar Works. For more information, please contact ritscholarworks@rit.edu.

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Fine and Applied Arts
in Candidacy for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Images in Felt

by

Lisa Popovics

May 2, 1990

Adviser : Don Bujnowski _____

Date : 5/2/90

Adviser : Max Lenderman _____

Date : 5/2/90

Adviser : Lawrence Williams _____

Date : 5/2/90

Special Assistant to the Dean
for Graduate Affairs : Phil Bornarth _____

Date : 5/9/90

Dean, College of Fine
and Applied Arts : Dr. Robert Johnston _____

Date : 5/10/90

I, _____, prefer to be contacted each time a
request for reproduction is made. I can be reached at the following
address.

Lisa Popovics
283 Congress Ave.
Lansdowne, PA
19050

Date : 5/2/90

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Abstract	i
List of Illustrations	ii
Foreword	1
Part I Histroy of Felt	3
Part II Thesis Techniques	9
Part III Images in Felt : The Body of Work	18
Endnotes	27
Bibliography	28

ABSTRACT

This written thesis documents the information used and applied in the process of creating the "Images in Felt" body of work. The document begins with a forward which briefly discusses personal history, and then is followed by the remainder of the paper which is broken up into three separate parts. The first part is entitled "History of Felt". This section contains relevant historical and present day facts about felt, as well as information on the Bedouin cultures that have used simple textile techniques throughout history. The second part, entitled "Thesis Techniques", describes the various processes used in the making of the body of work. This leads to the final chapter, entitled "Images in Felt : The Body of Work", which discusses each of the felted pieces of this body of work in both technical and conceptual aspects.

List of Illustrations

Figure 1	Felted Scythian saddle found at Pazyryk - from the book entitled <u>Feltmaking</u> [*] , p. 81.	p. 4
Figure 2	Rider from the Great Pazyryk felt - from the book entitled <u>The Art of the Feltmakers</u> [*] , col. pl.#1.	6
Figure 3	Bedouin woman displays her wares - from the article entitled "Women of Arabia", <u>National Geographic</u> [*] , p. 441.	7
Figure 4	An example of Saudi Bedouin weaving - from the book entitled <u>Traditional Crafts of Saudi Arabia</u> [*] , p. 28.	8
Figure 5	Present day nomadic production of felt - from the book entitled <u>The Art of the Feltmakers</u> [*] , back cover.	9
Figure 6	Carding wool into batts photo: L. Popovics	11
Figure 7	Rolling while felting photo: L. Popovics	12
Figure 8	Placing flax between two layers of screening photo: L. Popovics.	13

^{*} Further information available in the Bibliography.

Figure 9	Stenciling gesso onto felt photo: L. Popovics	15
Figure 10	Painting dye onto flax surface photo: L. Popovics	16
Figure 11	"Twins" photo: A. Gerardi	20
Figure 12	"Letters from Thomastown" photo: A. Gerardi	21
Figure 13	"Song for Bela" photo: A. Gerardi	22
Figure 14	"Fragments of a Dream on North Road" photo: A. Gerardi	23
Figure 15	"The Mother Country: Lumi" photo: A. Gerardi	24
Figure 16	"The Mother Country: Revontuli" photo: A. Gerardi	25

Foreword

My personal history is a strong underlying theme throughout this thesis investigation. I feel that I have been directly influenced by the experiences in my life, and it seems fitting to begin these writings with a brief summary of personal facts and memories.

I am a first generation American, born to a mother from Finland and a father from Hungary. They both arrived in the United States during the 1950's, at which point they were married and began their life in this country with a new family. This family is a small one, comprised of my mother, father, my twin brother, and myself.

The four of us had traveled and moved quite a bit as my brother and I were growing up. Much of this relocating was due to my fathers' work, as well as the occasional family visits to Europe. All of these were very inspirational, especially the excursions back to Finland and Hungary, where I could establish a sense of the cultures belonging to my parents, as well as becoming familiar with my relatives.

In 1978, our family moved to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Although I had experienced many different cultures before moving with my family to Saudi Arabia, never had I been exposed to a culture change so great. It was an experience that was a bit difficult at first, but despite these hardships which were an integral part of the lifestyle, there were many memorable moments and experiences which still remain alive.

I have also traveled on my own, always by moving to a particular

region of the world, acquiring work, and living there for an extended period of time. By taking on a "working vacation" I have been able to afford the travel expenses, as well as gain the ability to acquire a sense of the local culture.

As a result of these experiences, I have established friendships with a wonderful variety of people, and have treasured these friendships as my most valued possessions. It is the memories of these people, some which I presently have close contact with and some whom I do not, which have most inspired me in the making of this body of work.

Part I

History of Felt

The production of felt is a simple process, needing very little specific equipment and materials aside from wool, heat, moisture, pressure, and know how. Because of this primitive process, many historians deduce that felt was probably the first form of textile made by man.¹

Legendary origins have been handed down throughout the years in all of the countries with feltmaking histories, but in actuality there could have been many various causes leading to the discovery of felt. Perhaps man became first acquainted with felt through the matted wool on the body of a sheep, or the matted clumps shed from the sheep coat during the spring season of prehistoric times.

Wool has been a civilizing force for man. Most likely, the food value of sheep was discovered before the value of it's warm coat. However, man eventually began to create garments from the sheep woolly hide, to protect himself from the frigid temperatures, and quickly concluded that better use would be made of the animal by shearing it's wool and keeping it alive for a continued supply of wool. Thus began the symbiotic relationship between sheep and man. Man tended the sheep by feeding and protecting them, while the sheep provided man with food and warmth in return.²

The first people believed to use felt were the nomadic people of

Central Asia. This vast area in which they continually traveled was entitled by the Chinese during the 4th century B.C. as the "land of felt".³ The extensive use of the felt can be seen through the remains of their prehistoric nomadic culture, which indicates that felt was used for shelter, clothing, and ceremonial purposes.

The oldest examples of felt have been found in the Central Asian steppes, dating back to 600 B.C. At this point in time, man had also developed spinning and weaving technologies, indicating that the discovery of felt must have predated 600 B.C.⁴ Unfortunately, felt has a low survival rate due to archaeological conditions, and specimens from the early millennia rarely survive.

The most exciting archaeological examples of felt were discovered early in this century within the frozen tombs of the nomadic Scythian tribe at Pazyryk, located in what is now southern Siberia. The Scythians were a nomadic tribe of herdsman and horse-men who dominated over a large area of Eurasia during the first millennium before Christ.⁵

Ice and the absence of air had preserved the contents of the

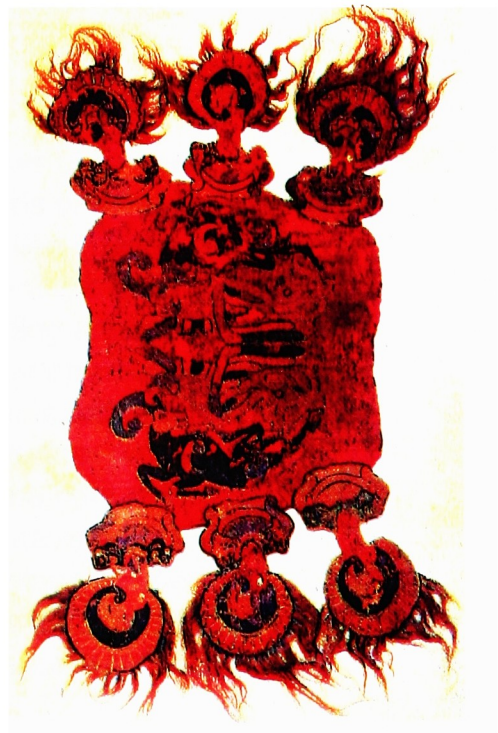


Fig. 1 Felted Scythian saddle found at Pazyryk

212 stone burial chambers. This archaeological site yielded an astounding array of felt artifacts: carpets, capes, linings for tombs, socks and stockings, horse ornaments, men's shirts, women's hair accessories, and many forms of decoration for tents, all dating from the period between 7th and 2nd century B.C.⁶

The most impressive treasure among the many artifacts of this site is known as the "Pazyryk felt". It is quite large in size, (4.5m x 6.5m), and contains a detailed and colorful scene :

On a natural ground two rows of figures are separated by three bands of floral patterns, and the felt is applied in various colors. The figures represent a seated goddess with a masculine face...holding a sacred branch in her hand, and a male rider approaching her on horseback. This pair is repeated six times with a suggestion of further repeats which have been cut. On the right hand side of the felt there appears to have been a border with representations of an elaborate bird and winged animal. Both motifs have been cut and possibly some lost during excavation and restoration.⁷

Of equal complexity and great interest, is the method of construction of this felt. All of their known techniques of feltmaking were used : appliqué, mosaic, inlay, embroidery, as well as a wide array of color present through the use of vegetable dyes. In addition, the felt was combined with other materials such as leather, fur, horsehair, goldleaf and tinfoil.⁸ The pieces from this site clearly indicate a past culture rich in the use and creation of felt artifacts.



Fig. 2 Rider from the Great Pazyryk Felt

There still exist present day cultures which utilize simple textile techniques, resulting in visually complicated results. A modern version of the nomadic culture which has been personally inspirational is the culture of the nomadic Bedouins of Saudi Arabia. These are people who have consciously decided to keep up the traditional wandering lifestyle of their ancestors, as opposed to the new opportunities which are available in the recently developed cities of this "oil boom" nation. They are a people of simplicity and utility. They carry around all of their life's belongings on the back of a camel, (or as many have recently chosen, a small pick-up

truck), keeping constantly on the move in search of grazing and water for their flocks of goats and camels.⁹ But despite the need to keep their amount of possessions to a minimum, they lavish what possessions they do have with rich and beautiful ornamentation.

Traditionally, textiles have had a long history in Saudi Arabia.

The origins stem back to sheep rearing people of prehistoric times, who lacked a sufficient supply of furs for their need of warmth, but certainly had a plentiful supply of wool. The pile rug, which is the most prized and appreciated form of Middle Eastern textile, was first contrived as a substitute for the animal pelt, and has since served in both functional and aesthetic aspects.¹⁰

The Bedouin people of Saudi Arabia have historically used, and still use, textiles in their everyday life : animal trappings, blankets, floor rugs, prayer rugs, clothes, accessories, and tents. The items are either made for their own use, or as items to trade or barter.

Their weaving process is one which often involves the combination of techniques. It is common to find several woven structures within the same piece, often exhibited by the presence of both warp and weft face



Fig. 3 Bedouin woman displays her wares

patterning. Also, their designs demonstrate a variety of influences and are typically geometric in character. A characteristic motif is one which holds either strong vertical or horizontal stripes, sometimes combined into plaids. Within this larger grid are smaller motifs which symbolize objects common to their life, such as a pyramid, an hour glass, or a camel.¹¹ The most common colors are red, black, and white.

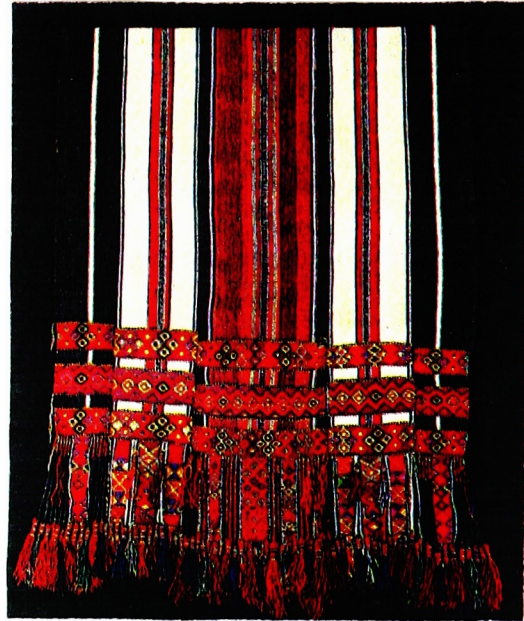


Fig. 4 An example of Saudi Bedouin weaving

The Bedouin weaver uses a simple horizontal stake loom, which produces narrow widths of woven cloth. The warp is stretched in full length, and the weaver sits on the woven cloth as she weaves. The woven portion is pulled behind so that she remains stationary. No piece of this loom is wider than the shuttle, and if necessary it can be packed away, ready to move, requiring very little space.¹²

The Saudi Bedouins do not produce any felted artifacts, because they mainly raise herds of goat whose hair is not structured properly to form felt. However, I find that I respond strongly to their use of simple textile techniques which result in richly woven and ornamental goods that better enhance the harsh aesthetic of their desert life.

Part II

Thesis Techniques

The technical emphasis of this body of work is one based upon simplicity, so I consciously chose to employ and combine processes which require very little specific equipment. I have several reasons for choosing to work within the realm of simplicity. The first reason relates strongly to my inspiration from the nomadic cultures of central Asia.



Fig. 5 Present day nomadic production of felt

All throughout history the nomadic people have maintained a very simple lifestyle, and yet despite these sparse conditions have been able to produce complex textile artifacts through the use

of basic materials and processes. I sought to challenge myself by placing limitations upon the extent of the complexity of the equipment and techniques involved. This would then require a stronger emphasis upon the use of the basic materials which were employed, so that the works would

develop an involved imagery through the direct manipulation of my hands.

I was also influenced by pragmatic concerns, and decided that this thesis would be a good opportunity to become well versed in a simple fiber medium which would not require the need for costly equipment. I was able to complete this thesis body of work with only a few necessary tools, which are small in scale and low in cost. I also feel that I will continue to travel during the coming years, and know that it would be important to be able to easily move any basic equipment which would be needed for my work. I am pleased with the results of this thesis inquiry, for I now feel well equipped through the knowledge gained of these simple processes to establish an affordable and transportable studio for fiber/felt production.

All of the pieces within this thesis body of work were the result of a combination of many basic techniques and materials, however the main technique employed was felting, and the main material used was wool. By using the prepared wool felt surface as a base, I would regard it much like a rough sketch upon which I would incorporate other processes to enhance the image, rendering it into a more developed and complex state. These secondary processes which were applied onto the surface of the felt, such as relief printing, dyeing, painting, drawing, hand stitching, and machine stitching, remained intact with the surface of the felt while leaving the durable structure of the underlying felt virtually unimpaired.

Felt is a durable and densely matted fabric formed by interlocking fibers. Wool is the fiber which most easily felts due to its unique structure of microscopic overlapping scales or plates which point from a

root to tip direction. This causes the fibers to "creep" in the tip to root direction while under heat and pressure, and as the fibers slide into one another they become irreversibly entangled.¹³

There are several simple requirements needed to form a sheet of felt. The first requirement is that the wool fibers be combed into a batt so that they are all running in the same direction. I accomplished this step by using a hand operated carding machine which quickly cards the wool fleece into even and consistent batts. I then would lay out the batts next to one another until forming the desired size of the sheet of felt. In order to make a structurally sound sheet of felt, one must prepare at least two layers of



Fig. 6 Carding wool into batts

carded fleece, placing the second layer of batts on top of the first so that the fibers of the first layer are running perpendicular to the fibers of the second layer. Once the batts are layed out properly, they are ready for felting. It is necessary to have some sort of support around the unfelted batts, and I chose to use fiberglass screening because of it's high flexibility and low cost. I sandwiched the fleece between two sheets of screening, and stitched together the sheets of screening around the edges.

The process of felting is very spontaneous and direct. All that is

needed for the fleece to felt is the presence of pressure, heat and a lubricant of some sort. Once I had the fleece and screening ready for felting, I soaked the fleece with hot water, placed some liquid soap on the surface, and began agitating the fleece with pressure. (The water combined with the soap acted as a lubricant.) The initial agitation should be very mild so as not to disturb the placement of the fleece within the screening, which still can move until the fibers have become felted. After several minutes of light agitation, the fibers should have become slightly felted, and one can begin to initiate more pressure to expedite the felting process. An efficient way to evenly and quickly felt is to roll the sheet of fleece and screening, which causes a build up of heat in the core of the roll, and also distributes the pressure more evenly over the fibers. It is helpful to roll the sheet of felt from all edges, as well as the corners, for this further maintains an even distribution of heat and pressure among the fibers.



Fig. 7 Rolling while felting

As the fleece is becoming felt, it will shrink. This is important to keep in mind when initially placing out the size of the sheet of felt. One

should always allow for 20%-30% shrinkage of the total area of the sheet from the fleece stage to the completed felt stage. Also, because of this shrinkage it is crucial to maintain an even treatment to all areas of the felt to produce even shrinkage so that the original shape of the felt will not deform, unless deformity of shape is desired.

Fibers other than wool which are coarse and long stapled can be felted, such as flax, mohair, alpaca, and llama. However, these fibers each have their own characteristics and therefore produce a felt particular to that fiber. I had used a substantial amount of felted flax in all of my thesis works, and found that it was not nearly as strong as felted wool, but that it would form a sheet and remain fairly stable as long as the fibers were kept dry. In order to form a sheet of felted flax, I had to be very careful in handling the flax fibers while they were wet because of their inability to entangle to form a strong bond. I would leave the felted flax tightly sewn between two sheets of fiberglass screening until it was thoroughly dry, at which point the flax fibers would bond to one another. This is similar to the bond that is formed with handmade paper. I found that



Fig. 8 Placing flax between two layers of screening

when I combined the flax with wool, the end result was one which was much more durable and easy to felt. Nearly any type of fiber, or even

unusual materials such as metal, paper, and wood, can be felted if carded together with wool.

Color can be an integral part of the felting process. Wool is easily dyed through the use of vegetable or acid dyes, and one can achieve various effects of color through the use of dyed fleece. Subtle blends of color can be acquired by carding different colors of fleece together, and more bold and graphic statements can be made by piecing different areas of dyed fleece together, as a puzzle. In both instances, the colors of the dyed fleece become physically interlocked during the felting process, creating a rich and deep quality of color.

Because of the direct and spontaneous nature of the felting process, imagery can be developed within a sheet of felt. The composition can be layed out by piecing together different areas of dyed fleece, which will eventually felt together. Once the felting process begins, the fibers migrate into one another and solidify the imagery. I found this to be a very exciting developmental stage of the piece, since I was never absolutely certain of how the fibers would felt together. Because the imagery can take on an unexpected look, this can bring forth many new ideas about how to approach the felt.

After the formation of the sheet of felt, which all contained some basic imagery, I would determine which areas of the felt needed to be accentuated further and strengthened the images through the manipulation of the surface. I did not feel intimidated to work in on the surface of the felt, since it is such a durable material. This allowed a personal freedom

to try many unusual drawing and painting media on the felts, and through this freedom I have learned a great deal.

I found that the most successful paints, or those that strongly adhered to the surface of the felt, were acrylic based. Most often this paint was printed onto the surface through the use of a stencil, which allowed for a cleaner image. I also printed oil based inks onto the surface of the felt, with linoleum blocks, and was again satisfied with



Fig. 9 Stenciling gesso onto felt

the results. The most successful drawing media were those that were soft, such as oil pastels or charcoal. These were easily applied onto the surface of the felt, and they often added a wonderful touch of color or depth in the needed areas.

Because of the extremely dense surface of the felt, fiber reactive dyes did not readily absorb into the wool fibers. Had I loosely felted the wool, it would have been easier to paint with dye, but the physical quality of the tightly felted wool was an aesthetic that was important to these thesis pieces. However, I found it was possible to create a surface on top of the felt which would accept the fiber reactive dyes. This was achieved by laying flax onto the surface of the piece of wool felt, and felting the



Fig. 10 Painting dye onto flax surface

two of them together with hot water and soap. The flax, now bonded to the surface of the wool, accepted the fiber reactive dyes with ease and added a nice dimension of translucent color onto the surface of the pieces.

After having placed several layers of media onto the surface, I would again evaluate the aesthetic of the felted

pieces. During the beginning stages of several of the early pieces, I had found that despite the rich and colorful surface of the felt with the dyes, paints and drawing materials, the overall feeling was one which was visually heavy. I had tried various methods of bringing some sort of activity onto the surface of the felt, and found that stitching, either by hand or with a machine, brought in a small scale texture which also provided an activation of color. This would usually be the finishing touch needed for the surface of the felt to come alive. There were pieces in which I then painted and drew over the stitches which provided an unusual surface texture.

This description of the techniques used among the thesis body of work is much more structured than was my personal process of working. I found this to be a beneficial way to approach the work. Often I would have several pieces developing at the same time, and would frequently

switch from one piece to the next, trying various techniques on each, or even begin working on all of them at the same time. This unstructured relationship with the work allowed for a creative freedom which often lead to new possibilites of actions and thought.

Part III

Images In Felt : The Body of Work

Each of the six pieces which make up the total group of the thesis work, is the result of many various thoughts, inspirations and ideas centering around the desire to utilize a traditional textile method in a non-traditional manner. I wanted to achieve an aesthetic which hinted at the notion of history and antiquity, but which also spoke of the present. By combining felt, the oldest textile form, with contemporary drawing, printing, and painting media, I was able to produce fiber pieces which contain that juxtaposition of the old with the new.

The first four pieces which I had completed were relatively small in scale, each within the region of 24"x36". These were mainly comprised of wool felt, but also contained a small amount of felted flax. The wool felt acted as a good base on which to paint, print, sew, and draw. This allowed for a nice vocabulary of expression and allowed a greater flexibility in developing the images.

I wanted each of these pieces to contain images which would allow the viewer to create his or her own story. The images which I placed in all of the pieces have a significant personal meaning regarding memories about various friendships that I have known, but it is not important that the viewer know the exact story that it narrates.

Because these are memories which contain great personal value, I have placed them, through the representation of an image, in the center

of each felt. Surrounding each image is a set of borders. These borders, like the borders used in most textiles from central Asia, are meant to protect and frame the contents which lie within these symbols of security. The central images are the areas within each felt which were given the most visual consideration, and as a result are the area of most detail.

Color is another focus on these pieces of work. Because felt can produce such rich and deep color effects, I took advantage of this opportunity. I wanted the characteristic chroma to be rich and lively, as an indication of the celebratory theme among all of the pieces. I started the process by making sheets of felt which were comprised of various shades of dark colors, so that those colors which were layered on the surface would read more vibrantly than if they were placed onto a white or light surface.

Over all, I am pleased with how this first set of four felts turned out. I feel there is a strong central image within each of the felts, as well as a considerable amount of detail on the surface of each piece which activates the eye and captures it in appropriate places. This relates to the overall scale of the pieces, in that the amount of information within them feels proportional to their size. The various moods among the four pieces make a nice transition from one to the next, and I feel satisfied with how they read together as a group.

The piece entitled "Twins" was the beginning of this thesis investigation. It is a piece about the companionship that I have shared

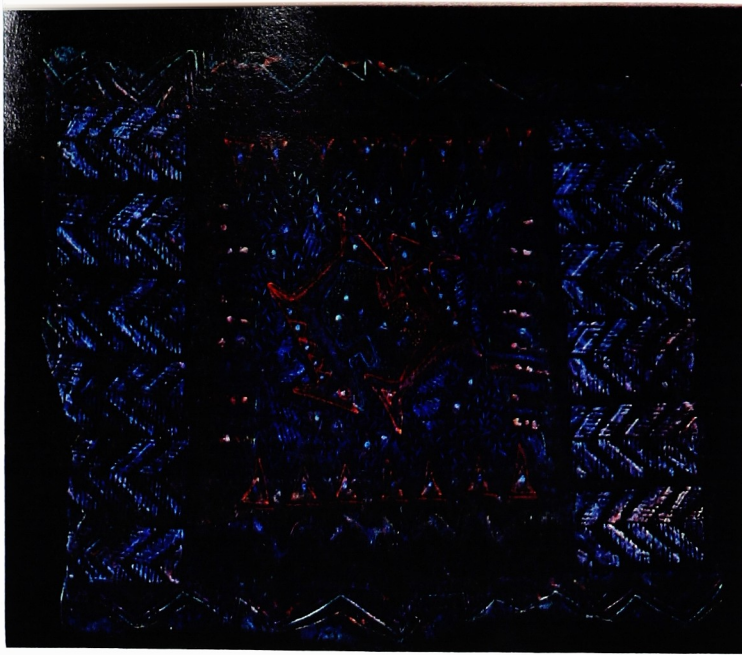


Fig.11 "Twins"

with my twin brother,
which explains the
significance of the two
fish in the center of the
felt. I wanted the
overall feeling to be
playful, as this is
characteristic of the
relationship between my
brother and I. Because

this was my first piece, I did not have a good sense of how the drawing and painting materials were to be used in combination with the felt. I was discouraged by the heavy look of the felt, and initially was not able to bring in those lively colors that I needed in order to achieve the playful feeling. After layering a lot of various materials onto the surface, I eventually took to it with a needle and thread and incorporated the color in that manner. It was a slow process, but after many stitches it lead to results that were satisfying.

The second piece is entitled "Letters From Thomastown." This memory recalls a time when I spent a summer working on a farm in rural Ireland, and celebrates the friendships I have maintained with the people of that region. The main image is one of a letter which slowly transforms into the scenery of Thomastown.

This is a very detailed portion on the felt, which contains a lot of

smaller images, words, stitches and color. I was able to easily incorporate color onto the surface of this because I had placed felted flax on top of the wool felt. The flax was much more accepting of the color than was the wool felt. The borders of this piece, which contain images of hot cups of tea, were printed with linoleum blocks. This portion of the piece has felted wool as it's top layer, and I found that the oil base litho inks printed very well onto the dense surface of the felt. Once I had printed the patterns and images, I started to draw onto the surface of the felt with soft oil pastels. This provided a new vocabulary of smooth color to place onto the surface. It also pulled together the whole image of the piece, which was beginning to get too detailed and fractioned.

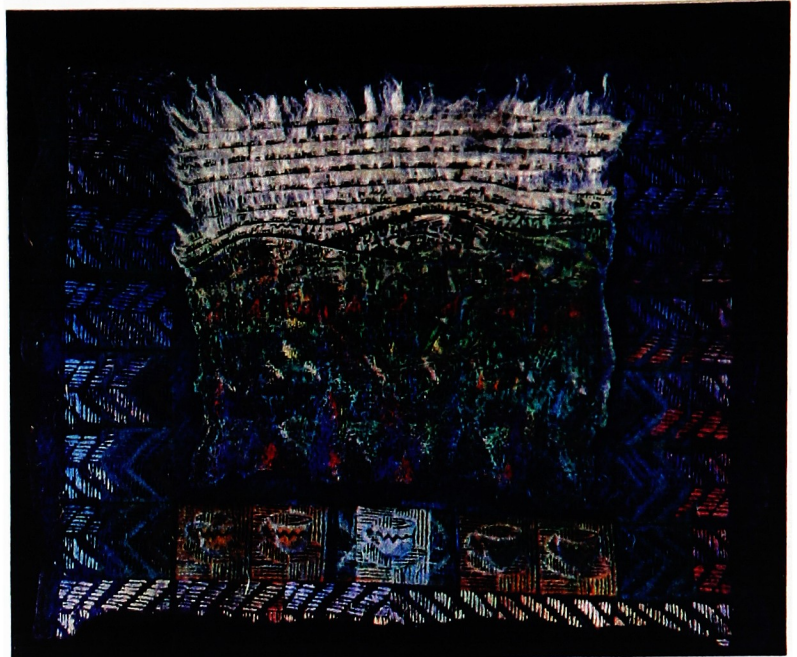


Fig.12 "Letters From Thomastown"

The next piece, "Song for Bela", is about a friendship with a woman with whom I share a lot of similar interests. She had spent some time living in India, and so I worked with the colors and patterns endemic of that part of the world.

This piece has the most layers built up from the original surface of

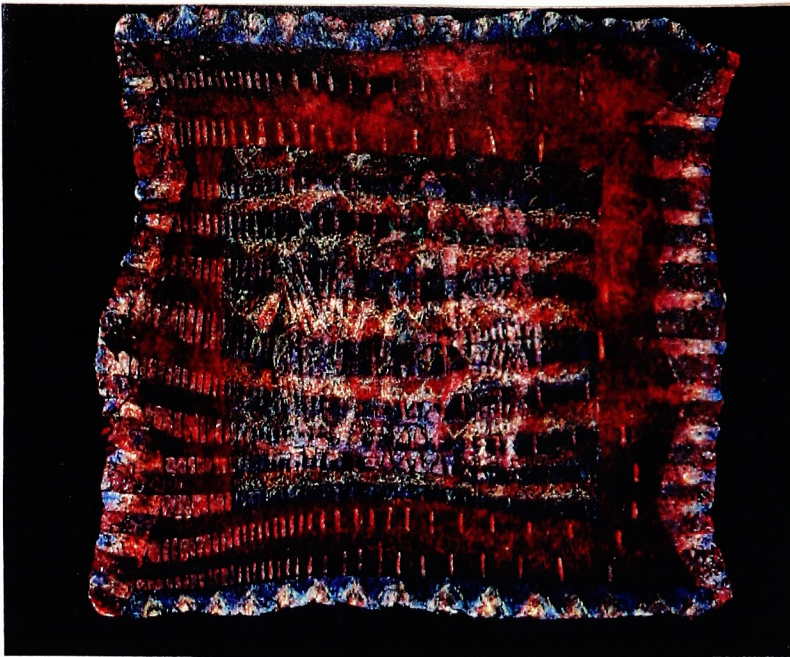


Fig.13 "Song for Bela"

the felt, and this complexity creates a lot of interest. The reason that it contains the most layers is that I had changed my initial idea of what the central image would be, after it had been printed onto the felt. I had

initially planned for three dancing figures to be in the center of the felt. After I had printed them they appeared to be too stiff, so I began to systematically cover them up with printing, stitches, drawing, painting, more stitches, etc. This continued on until the surface read of lively rows of patterns, colors and marks, with the underlying figures just barely visible.

The final piece of this set of four felts is one which is more somber in tone. It is entitled "Fragments of a Dream on North Road", and reflects upon the notions of struggle and endurance as well as the importance of receiving support from others. The central image is of a farmhouse, which is a woodcut printed on felted flax. The colors are toned down, with the predominant ones being gray and dark blue. I did not want this piece to have the vibrant characteristics of some of the earlier



Fig. 14 "Fragments of a Dream on North Road"

pieces, but rather one which contained dark and subtle tones. To achieve this, I drew mainly with soft charcoal and stitched the surface surrounding the main image with dark thread. There are a few central areas that do contain subdued color, and these are stitched onto the felt on top of those areas of stitched dark thread.

With the final two pieces of the thesis body of work, I took a different approach to the combination of felt with other media. I increased the scale of the overall size to approximately 4'-0" by 8'-0", and involved much more generalized imagery with less detail. This change of pace was exciting to work with because the processes were so much more spontaneous and gestural than those of the first four smaller felts. The bases of these felts are comprised of wool but the surfaces are layered with undyed flax, and the two materials are felted together. These flax surfaces were painted with Procion fiber reactive dyes, and then further worked with oil pastels.

Both pieces refer to the landscape of Finland, which is the country where my mother was born and a place that I have visited several times. This is why they are entitled "The Mother Country". They are horizontal in shape and do not contain borders around the edges, for these were meant to be free and open in their orientation.

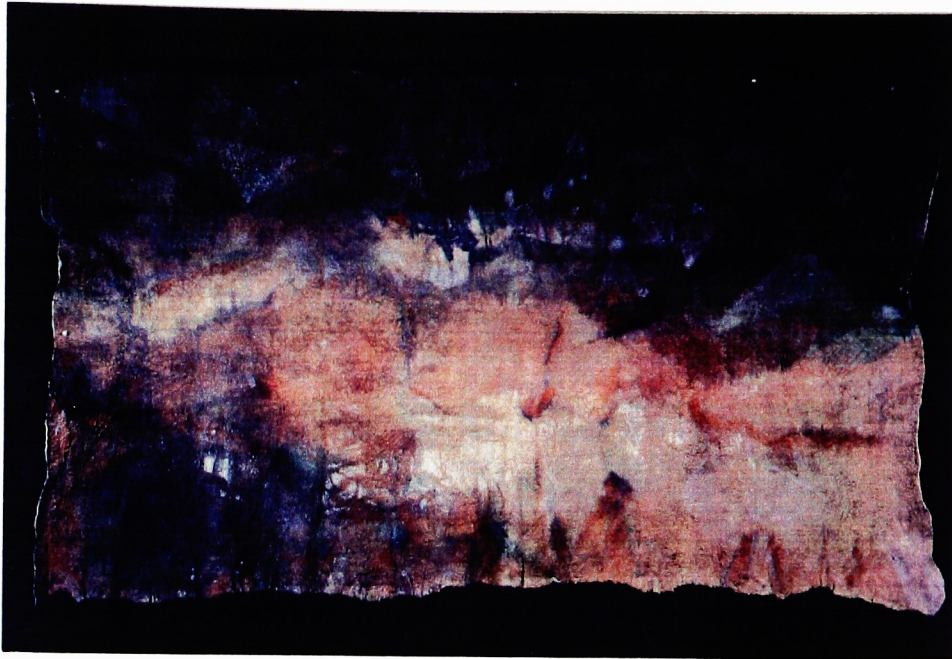


Fig. 15 "The Mother Country: Lumi"

The first of the two pieces, "The Mother Country : Lumi" has a base of undyed wool, and the white of the wool peeks through the flax at several points. This provides areas of nice contrast where the upper layer of flax is painted a darker tone and the lower layer of wool remains white. The title of this piece, "Lumi", is the Finnish word for snow. This seemed a fitting title to the piece since the end result resembled a landscape of a

snowfield.

The second piece is entitled "The Mother Country : Revontuli". It has a base of wool which was dyed a deep indigo color, and flax that was unevenly distributed on the upper layer. Because the base color of the wool is dark, the colors which were painted onto the flax surface appear to be much more vibrant than those on "Lumi". Also, the rich colors of the oil pastel read on the surface in a much bolder manner. "Revontuli" is the Finnish word for the northern lights. This was an appropriate title because the darkness of the underlying wool made the scenery of the brightly colored flax appear to be transpiring during the night.

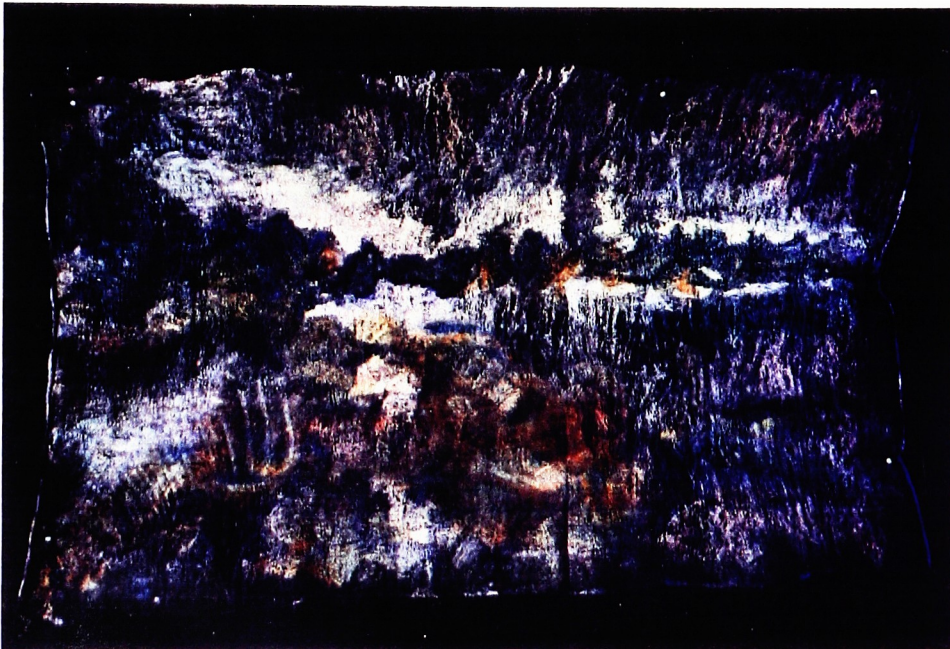


Fig 16. "The Mother Country: Revontuli"

In closing, it is important to state that all throughout this thesis investigation I was met by challenges both technical and conceptual in nature. Although I may not have completely resolved all of the many aspects involved in producing this body of fiber works, I do feel that I have learned a great deal about the possibilities concerning the combination of fiber with other image making processes. I am pleased with the end results, and am particularly happy in knowing that these simple processes of felting, painting, printing, sewing and drawing are ones which I can continue to investigate upon entering life after academia.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Anne Einset Vickrey, Felting By Hand (Menlo Park CA : Craft Works Publishing, 1987), p. 11.
- ² Nina Hyde, "Fabric History of Wool", National Geographic, May 1988, p. 554.
- ³ M.E. Burkett, The Art of the Feltmaker (Kendal, England : M.E. Burkett, 1979), p. 21.
- ⁴ M.E. Burkett, p. 7.
- ⁵ Beverly Gordon, Felting (New York : Watson-Guptill Publications, 1980), p. 21.
- ⁶ M.E. Burkett, p.9.
- ⁷ M.E. Burkett, p. 10
- ⁸ Gordon, p. 21.
- ⁹ Marianne Alireza, "Women of Arabia", National Geographic, October 1987, p. 436.
- ¹⁰ May H. Beattie, "On the Making of Carpets", The Warp and Weft of Islam, (London : The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1972), p. 11.
- ¹¹ John Topham, Traditional Crafts of Saudi Arabia (London : Stacey International, 1982), p. 23.
- ¹² Topham, p. 24.
- ¹³ Hyde, p. 557.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alireza, Marianne. "Women of Arabia." National Geographic, Oct. 1987, pp. 423-453.
- Beattie, May H. "On the Making of Carpets." The Warp and Weft of Islam. London : The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1972.
- Burkett, M.E. The Art of the Felt Maker. Kendal, England : M.E. Burkett, 1979.
- Gordon, Beverly. Feltmaking. New York : Watson-Guptill Publications, 1980.
- Hyde, Nina. "Fabric History of Wool." National Geographic, May 1988, pp. 552-591.
- Topham, John. Traditional Crafts of Saudi Arabia. London : Stacey International, 1982.
- Vickrey, Anne Einset. Felting by Hand. Menlo Park CA : Craft Works Publishing, 1987.